2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

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About the Authors

Thomas and Hatsumi Maretzki chose the village of Taira on the northeast coast of Okinawa. Thomas Maretzki was an advanced graduate student in Anthropology at Yale; his wife, a graduate of the University of Hawaii who had worked for one year on the staff of the Gesell Institute's nursery school in New Haven, Connecticut. The Maretzkis rented half a house in the village. They were assisted in their work by Nariyuki Agarie, a graduate of the State University of Iowa and subsequently a graduate student in psychology at Yale University, and by Kiyoshi Yogi of Naha. Although the Maretzkis did not have children to speed their participation in community life, Mrs. Maretzki's knowledge of Japanese and her exceptional gift with young children were invaluable aids. She seldom moved about the village without an entourage of small, devoted children.

The Maretzkis returned to Okinawa in 1960. Unfortunately time did not permit the incorporation in this monograph of any data collected on this later expedition. Thomas Maretzki is now teaching at the University of Hawaii.

preciative statement or an introduction. It is polite to make the rounds in this fashion, to sit before another guest, fill his cup and utter some polite phrases, then wait for a return compliment.

By the time men—and a little later women—have been served food and drink in some quantity, there is no more stiffness in the room, for with every cup of sake animation and voice volume increase. Speeches that have not yet come to a conclusion show definite signs of inspiration; each speaker who sits down is trumped in eloquence by his successor. Long after serious oratory has been dispensed with, a happy celebrant may get up and sonorously hold forth. During fieldwork the authors were frequently the aim of such addresses. In one of them a farmer, quiet and serious during everyday routine but known for his merriment and wit when in his cups, held forth on a future visit to Taira by these Americans. "There will be skyscrapers," he said in a booming voice, "subways, wide lanes and bright lights," and on he went to the delight of everybody.

On such occasions Tairans display their skill in playing with words and their ability to act and mimic. The assistant to the headman, similarly quiet on ordinary days, several months after our arrival came into a room where the authors were present during one of the many post-New Year celebrations. At an advanced stage of merriment himself, he turned to his host and by way of introduction said that he had just come from Hong Kong. "Oh, from Hong Kong," the host said, "that is why you cough so, kong, kong, kong," adding that he himself came from New York (pronounced in Japanese similar to *nyûyoku*, meaning "a bath"), whereupon the arriving guest went into the motions of someone taking a bath, saying "ah from *nyûyoku*," and so the fun went on, mostly as a take-off on the American guests who were present. This reminded the clerk of another story at the expense of the authors, which he told with gusto. "That first day he came to Taira, Maretzki came up to me when I was carrying pebbles from the beach and asked if he could help since he was going to haul pebbles too. Then he started to introduce himself, and I only understood 'Umaretsuki' (similar to Japanese for 'temperament') . . . I waited and waited for a story, but nothing followed. I did not know what to say." He had never repeated this story during many sober encounters.

At another event, when several teachers were present, one of the men, after much gaiety, turned to a female teacher whose husband had left for the city to find a job and called over: "Hey, your mosquito netting must be wide now, huh?" The woman blushed, covered her mouth with a handkerchief and laughed.

The evening is never old before one man, or several who are known

Two members of the SIRI team both saw bone-washings, and were both impressed by this display. The ceremony I saw consisted not only of the washing of one set of bones but the transfer of another skeleton from another tomb. While the tomb was being prepared the daughter of the man whose bones were being transferred was made to hold the skull. The sight of the teen-age girl holding her father's skull before her, hardly able to move, her lips and eyes shut tight, tears streaming down her face, is one not easily forgotten. 765

The Okinawans are curious about the funeral customs of others, sensitive about their own, and possibly dissatisfied with them. Their sensitivity is shown by the fact that after I had observed the bone-washing just mentioned, someone circulated a rumor, untrue, that I had photographed the ceremony in order to show Americans what went on. This rumor might have seriously damaged my rapport with this family and with others in the community if I had not been defended by the person who had supervised the bone-washing, the old lady mentioned at the beginning of this section. All three SIRI team members were questioned about American practices and heard statements to the effect that perhaps cremation should be adopted. Cremation does, of course, do away with the necessity for both the bone-washings and the large tombs. A crematorium is operating in Naha, but it is doubtful if the practice will spread very rapidly in the country. New tombs, bigger and better than ever, are still being built, old ones are being repaired, and the familiar method of burial and reburial goes on. The prestige attached to the larger and impressive tomb is undoubtedly a factor in the survival of the system. But there may also be psychic needs as yet unexplored that the system and in particular the emotional orgy of the bone-washing satisfies. 764 765 123 829 [554]

Offerings to the Dead After the funeral the family of the deceased makes offerings both before the tomb and before the temporary paper tablet in the home. During the first seven weeks after a death this tablet is kept on a low table with incense burning before it; relatives and neighbors make formal visits in order to burn incense, pray, and leave gifts of money. On every seventh day till the forty-ninth the family makes extra offerings, burns uchikabi (imitation paper money said to be used for paying taxes in the next world), and makes offerings before the tomb. Then the name is written on the permanent tablet. Thereafter, the family makes offerings at the tomb and at the tablets and burns uchikabi on the first, second, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirty-third anniversaries of the death. At the end of this time the deceased is believed to require no more individual consideration---if all the offerings up to that time have been properly made. 765 769

However, throughout each year on a number of occasions offerings are made for all the dead members of the family. These occasions are the major holidays, nearly all of which are primarily directed toward the worship of the dead. The principal of these are: 1) Lunar New Year's; 2) Shiimii, in the spring, an occasion for visiting both the tomb of the immediate family and tombs of more remote ancestors; 3) the U-machii, the 15th days of the 5th and 6th lunar months, occasions when representatives of the larger kin groups worship before the ancestral tablets at the main house; 4) U-bung, during the 7th lunar month, when all the dead are believed to return to the house. Beside these there are a number of minor holidays on which offerings are made. 769 527

511 [Kitazato]
621 the houses are the same small, poorly-built structures of thatch and scrap
735 lumber that are found on the beach. By way of contrast, the house which
[342] the author rented in Kanegusuku was the poorest and shabbiest in that vil-
[184] lage; yet, the same house in Kitazato would easily have been the best.
Shabby appearances are not limited to houses, for the people too are more poorly dressed than elsewhere on Okinawa.

621 Food Nearly everywhere on Okinawa the authors heard that the peo-
511 ple are eating better today than before the war; such is not the case for
262 Kitazato, and the villagers are most emphatic about this. Potatoes, beans, and other vegetable products form the mainstay of their diet; often times, they say, potatoes are dug up before they are fully mature, so great is the pressure for food. It is the opinion of the local agricultural office that the people are slowly starving to death, and the villagers state that they are always hungry. The local storekeepers say that the people do not have enough money to buy canned foods to supplement their diet. Though Hama is
[226] virtually on the water the villagers do no fishing since the occupation is regarded as a foreign one; however, some shell fish are collected by the women.

621 Exodus of Youth One of the marked features of the village is the
511 general absence of young men and women in the fifteen to twenty-five age
166 group, for as soon as the student completes junior high school, he or she heads for the city seeking employment. A number of the families in the village are said to subsist mainly on the money which their children send back. According to the mayor 61 families have left the village since the end of the war; he feels that if they had not left, things would be much worse. Most of those who left were families containing grown children who could work; the parents in some cases were reluctant to leave, but their children were anxious to leave. A slight decline in military employment in early 1954 resulted in several of these families' returning to the village, and the mayor was apprehensive lest more return.

621 One characteristic of the population of this village which struck
847 the author was the disproportionate number of females to males in the age group under five years. In this group there were 54 males and 33 females, whereas the groups above were more nearly proportionate. Female infanticide has been a common occurrence during times of famine or under conditions of extreme poverty in Japan and China, and the authors heard several stories giving some evidence of it on Okinawa. No factual evidence of any sort was gathered by the author in Kitazato to corroborate this interpretation of the statistics; however, the fact that the permanent resettlement of the village in its present locations took place approximately six years ago in 1948 may lend some credence to this interpretation.

62 Attitude toward Americans The villagers' initial reaction to the
829 presence of the author in the village was one of fear and veiled hostility.
Gradually this was overcome, and good rapport was established. During one
● [123] of his last visits to the community the author was told, "The first day you were in the village everyone wondered if the military were going to make us move again. No one slept that night." At the same time the villagers are